

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 KUWAIT 00445 01 OF 02 240834Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----115646 240840Z /17

P 240725Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0001
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KUWAIT 0445

EXDIS

JERUSALEM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-2
TAGS: KUWAIT FOREIGN MINISTER'S REACTION TO SUSPENSION OF
PEACE NEGOTIATIONS

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REF: SECTO 1074 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: AFTER MY BRIEFING JAN. 23 ON SECRETARY
VANCE'S MEETINGS WITH BEGIN, DAYAN AND SADAT ON JAN. 19-20,
KUWAIT'S FONMIN PROVIDED FOLLOWING COMMENTS: FIRSTLY,
HE CRITICIZED SUPPLY BY USG OF SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS,
INCLUDING AIRCRAFT, TO ISRAEL AT THIS TIME, WARNING

THAT IT WOULD CAUSE SERIOUS NEGATIVE REACTION AMONG ARABS AND COULD OPEN DOOR TO BROADER ACCEPTANCE OF SOVIETS IN AREA. SECONDLY, HE SUGGESTED THAT, IN VIEW OF BREAKDOWN OF ISRAELI/EGYPTIAN NEGOTIATIONS, THIS WAS THE APPROPRIATE TIME TO FOLLOWUP UNSYG WALDHEIM'S PROPOSAL FOR A PRE-GENEVA PREPARATORY MEETING IN N.Y. AT THE UN WITH PARTICIPATION OF ALL PARTIES CONCERNED, INCLUDING USSR. KUWAIT, AS MODERATE ARAB STATE, SAW THIS AS WAY TO INSURE THAT ALL ARAB PARTIES, AND ALSO USSR, WOULD SHOULDER THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS MATTER RATHER THAN ALLOW SOME OF THEM TO SUBVERT PEACE PROCESS FROM OUTSIDE. END SUMMARY.

2. AT A JANUARY 23 MEETING WITH FONMIN SHAIKH SABAH AL-AHMAD AL-SABAH, I CONVEYED TO HIM CONTENTS OF PARAS 2 THROUGH 5 OF REFTEL ON SECRETARY'S MEETINGS WITH BEGIN/DAYAN AND SADAT JAN. 19-20. FONMIN EXPRESSED THANKS FOR THIS INFORMATION AND NOTED THAT, ALTHOUGH HE WAS IN CARETAKER STATUS AS THE RESULT OF RESIGNATION OF KUWAIT GOVERNMENT JAN. 22, HE WAS AUTHORIZED TO TAKE UP URGENT MATTERS OF WHICH THE SUBJECT OF PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WAS ONE.

3. SABAH AL-AHMAD AGREED WITH MY (OBVIOUS) CONCLUSION FOLLOWING BRIEFING THAT THIS WAS A DIFFICULT AND COMPLEX PROBLEM AND THAT SOLUTION WAS NOT EASY. HE NOTED THAT CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH RECENT NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT
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TOOK PLACE WERE NOT "NATURAL" AND THAT PRESIDENT SADAT, THROUGH HIS INITIATIVE, CREATED A SPLIT AMONG THE ARABS. WHILE GOK PROBABLY DID NOT AGREE WITH HIS METHOD, IT AND OTHER ARAB GOVERNMENTS DID SHARE SAME AIR AND DESIRE FOR PEACE. HOWEVER, THESE DIFFERENCES AMONG ARABS WERE NEITHER IN THEIR INTEREST NOR IN THAT OF THE US INSELF.

4. THE FONMIN SAID HE DID NOT PROPOSE TO GO INTO DETAIL ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED BUT DID RECOGNIZE THAT CURRENT SITUATION PUT SADAT IN VERY DIFFICULT AND EMBARRASSING POSITION, INCLUDING AMONG HIS ARAB BROTHERS. THIS EMBARRASSMENT WILL BE INCREASED BY US ACTION IN PROVIDING SOPHISTICATED MILITARY WEAPONS, INCLUDING AIRCRAFT, TO ISRAEL AT THIS TIME. THIS UNTIMELY SUPPLY OF WEAPONS COULD CREATE A SERIOUS NEGATIVE REACTION AMONG THE ARAB PEOPLES AND "INFLICT DAMAGE ON FRIENDS OF THE US." SABAH AL-AHMAD ESTIMATED THAT THIS REACTION COULD BE CONTAINED FOR THE PRESENT, BUT QUESTIONED HOW LONG IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO HOLD BACK THE FEELINGS OF THE PEOPLE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AREA. KUWAIT, AS A MODERATE ARAB

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-----115714 240846Z /17

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0002
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
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EXDIS

STATE, WISHED TO DO SOMETHING TO HELP BRING ARABS TOGETHER,
BUT THIS INFORMATION ABOUT THE SUPPLY OF AMERICAN ARMS TO
ISRAEL PUTS FRIENDS OF THE US, SAUDI ARABIA IN PARTICULAR,
IN A DIFFICULT POSITION AND MIGHT OPEN THE DOOR FOR
EXPANSION OF INFLUENCE OF ANOTHER POWER (READ USSR) INTO
THIS AREA.

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5. SABAH AL-AHMAD STATED THAT GOK WOULD BE HAPPY IF ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WERE REMOVED FROM MIDDLE EAST AREA AND PURSUED IN THE UN AS WALDHEIM HAD SUGGESTED IN A PROPOSAL FOR A PRE-GENEVA PREPARATORY MEETING. THIS WOULD LIMIT THE POTENTIAL OF THE RADICALS TO CREATE DISSENSION IN THE AREA AND WOULD FORCE ALL PARTIES MEETING UNDER THE UN UMBRELLA, INCLUDING THE USSR, TO SHOULDER THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES IN THIS MATTER. THE FONMIN REPEATED THAT NOW WAS THE TIME TO MOVE THE VENUE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS SINCE PRESIDENT SADAT DID NOT SPEAK ON BEHALF OF THE ARAB WORLD AND IT WAS LIKELY ANY SOLUTION COMING OUT OF EGYPTIAN/ISRAELI DISCUSSIONS WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO THE OTHER ARABS.

6. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY OF A MEETING OF ARAB STATES DESIGNED TO RESTORE UNITY, SABAH AL-AHMAD SAID THAT ANY SUCH SUMMIT MEETING WOULD REQUIRE EXTENSIVE PREPARATIONS. IF THE ARABS HEARD THAT THE U.S. WOULD SUPPORT THE WALDHEIM PROPOSAL, SUCH A MEETING MIGHT BE POSSIBLE. HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THESE MATTERS WITH SAUDI FONMIN PRINCE SAUD WHEN HE COMES TO KUWAIT JAN. 24.

7. I RECALLED SABAH AL-AHMAD'S EARLIER SUPPORT OF THE WALDHEIM PROPOSAL BUT NOTED THAT IT CAME AT A TIME WHEN PROGRESS ON THE ISRAELI/EGYPTIAN TALKS WAS BEING MADE. MY GOVERNMENT HAD FELT THAT IT WAS NOT USEFUL TO INTRODUCE A NEW ELEMENT INTO THE PEACE PROCESS. I ALSO NOTED THAT, AS I HAD STATED IN MY BRIEFING, THE US BELIEVED THAT THE DAMAGE CAUSED BY THE INTERRUPTION OF THE JERUSALEM TALKS WAS NOT IRREPARABLE AND THAT PROGRESS COULD STILL
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BE ACHIEVED. HOWEVER, I WOULD REPORT THE FONMIN'S VIEWS TO MY GOVERNMENT.
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